

Amherst Council on Aging Minutes
June 13th, 2002

Members Present: Ben Bowditch, Doris Mundo, Isaac BenEzra, Alan Root, Barbara Melrose, Janice Denton, Al Chevan, Sara Wolff, Jean Haggerty

Staff Present: John Clobridge, Nancy Pagano, Barbara Slovin, Hermia Salisbury

Guests: Elsie Fetterman, Henry Peirce

Senior Trust Officer: Doris Holden, Treasurer

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements: New FY'03 members Elsie Fetterman and Henry Peirce were introduced. Their terms begin July 1st.

Alan spoke a bit about his not being reappointed for the partial term he had sought. He is turning 70 and wants to travel and has other endeavors in mind. He said, "Sometimes more can be accomplished from outside rather than inside the tent."

Minutes accepted as read. Alan did not like the underlining of items in the minutes as he felt that the choice of what to underline was arbitrary. He suggested putting VOTED in front of items instead. There was not a consensus about this style. Some members expressed appreciation for the amount of detail included in the minutes. Barbara Melrose stated that when she was secretary she liked having someone else take the minutes so she could participate in the meetings. She liked being able to edit the minutes before distribution. John gave assurance that the minutes could be corrected if necessary by the secretary before distribution. It was also noted that members appreciate it when all minutes and documents are mailed out together prior to a COA meeting. (Note: Doris did not get the 5/3 minutes that were mailed out by separate letter prior to this meeting.)

Senior Trust: Alan shared that the members of the Trust have been trying for several months to meet with Jim Becker and that so far they have been unsuccessful.

- Reimbursement for Town Meeting flyer. John passed out a copy of one of two flyers distributed at Town Meeting. He felt that the COA campaign was successful and noted that our budget passed with no changes. John is requesting \$200 from the Trust to reimburse the Senior Center Club for this print bill. Isaac wants to go on record that he is concerned about the limited resources of the Trust and that he thinks it is a Town responsibility to pay for this and that he is voting against reimbursement. Alan concurs and says that when the COA votes to spend Trust money they must act as trustees and not see the money as a "cushion" for Town expenses. It was explained that there was a misunderstanding between John and Alan in the later afternoon before Town Meeting about what to do when the copier in Bangs did not do an adequate job. John thought Alan wanted the copy to be done in color at a print shop. Alan suggested that the Trust loan the money to the S.C.C. until the end of the fiscal year. Doris worried about setting a bad precedent for staff when personal money is outlaid and then staff have to go to great lengths to get it reimbursed. Barbara Melrose stated that the COA was not presented with the opportunity to discuss this expense in advance and that this is a "process" problem. John said that the Town still has no money for this in this fiscal year. Barbara Melrose asks could there be a compromise to pay part of the money. Isaac moved that the Trust loan the money to the S.C.C. until the end of the fiscal year. Nancy reminded members that Town monies from the new fiscal year can not be used to pay for bills in the old fiscal year. She also said that it is not helpful to loan the S.C.C. this money. It would be best to simply decide to pay it or not. Barbara Melrose wants to see this expense be reimbursed but in the future wants the Trust to be asked first BEFORE the money is spent. Al Chevan moved to reimburse the S.C.C. the \$200. Sara and Alan state that as a matter of principle they will vote against this as they don't believe the Trust should be used for such expenditures. Janice Denton says she hates to "nickel and dime things" and says that the Trust has the money and she recommends reimbursement with the new policy. **VOTED 6-3**

to give back the \$200 to the S.C.C. with the proviso that in the future, the Trust be consulted BEFORE bills are incurred.

- Five COA members and John attended the M.C.O.A. Conference at a cost of \$20 each. John will pay for himself, but is asking the Trust to pay \$100 for the registrations. Barbara Melrose asked why the group was not informed about the fact that no money was available so they could make an informed decision about whether to go or not. John explained that he sends out information about all kinds of meetings and conferences with the details and has not felt it necessary to state whether or not there is money available to attend. Doris Mundo feels that the COA members should be told about whether or not funds are available. Jean Haggerty expressed that she would have paid when registering (had she been told) and that such conferences are board training which she feels is a worthy expense she would find money for. Al Chevan says he would vote to reimburse the money. Isaac says it was a helpful conference and he feels that information learned at such events should be reported on at COA meetings. He thinks that this is an appropriate use of Trust money. Doris Mundo feels it is important to be informed and suggests that unless board members can't afford it, they should pay the \$20 individually. Alan asked if John has input into the conference's dates as they frequently conflict with our COA meetings. John says he does attend planning meetings. Alan says that while HE can afford it, some members might not be able to. He also thinks that it is not an appropriate Trust expense and he is against this motion and reimbursement. Sara seeks clarification of the appropriate use of Trust funds. She feels there needs to be clarification of the appropriate use of Trust funds...guidelines are needed for Trust expenditures and this needs to be looked at in the future. **John suggested that he bill members individually and that those who wish to could request a scholarship. It was decided to withdraw the original motion and to defer the matter to John to resolve as he described.**
- Nancy reminded members that next month she will be submitting a bill on behalf of the S.C.C. so that it can be reimbursed for scholarships given.

Senior Center Parking: John has met with the Parking Commission and it is now expected that the new garage will open sometime in July. Questions were asked about accommodations for seniors. 1) John expects that there will be approximately 15 free spaces for seniors behind Ann Whalen and an additional 10 or so other spaces in the Rao's and Panda East lots. 2) Redesigned handicapped stickers will be given out in the future by the Health Department in September or October and people will be encouraged to apply for these. 3) John's trying to get the Commission to set up a way to allow seniors to get a special discount bringing the hourly price down to 20¢. Another idea John is exploring is an alternative pass for several hours, but the response to this is not encouraging. John will keep the COA informed. Barbara Melrose asked how a discount could work given that there are meters. John explained that only the surface parking is metered and that the lower level will use a ticket machine at entry. Doris wondered if there is a distinction when giving out breaks to seniors when they are coming to S.C. activities or if the breaks are for any use. John says generally the breaks are for S.C. usage with the understanding that people may combine tasks. Alan said that in terms of priorities for disabled that the Town is not using the state view which is more restrictive. Barbara Slovin described our current system which enables herself and Nancy to give out handicapped stickers. Alan suggests that an article be put in the next *Spirit* about where all this stands.

Work Plan for FY03: Alan has put a draft work plan that he designed for the new fiscal year in the COA packet. He seeks comments on this. Doris feels that this is a helpful tool in knowing where we are going. Sara feels that the idea of a work plan is great and that it should be designed by COA members working together with S.C. staff. The idea for such a plan came from a discussion between Alan and Barry.

Wellness Committee Report: Sara says that the committee is continuing to research data. Maura is the outreach worker for the group. The committee is compiling information about how fitness centers are run to help in planning. The design of the new S.C. health forms are finalized and will be used starting in September. Sara shared with COA members that the S.C. is seeking

someone to lead the gentle fitness program Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It's leader of 24 years, Diane Murch, retired.

Other:

- Isaac reported that Town Meeting appropriated the \$12,000 to extend the Amity St. shuttle.
- Isaac also reported that the recent bus to Canada took 30 seniors and was very successful. He feels great progress is being made on changing the legislation regarding prescription drugs.
- Barbara Melrose spoke to the fact that Medicare doesn't do competitive billing for items and that there needs to be legislation to correct this.
- Alan has learned that because he is a veteran he is eligible for pharmaceuticals from the VA center (while continuing with Medigap insurance.) Barbara Melrose said that people don't like having to go to the VA for their prescriptions. Ben Bowditch said that one problem is that the VA doesn't have all the meds available and that there are limitations. Doris Mundo asked whether the COA takes advantage of the speakers available from the Veterans Career Center.

The next meeting of the COA is July 11th at 9 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy Hirsh Pagano